

While everything registrars and electoral boards do in their offices is actually preparing for the next Election Day, there are specific things that must get done before each election.

One of the very first steps in Election Day preparation is polling place selection. (See Chapter 13.)

- ❗ The following checklist is a **generic** example and **should be customized** to meet your locality's needs. The timeline for some of the tasks may change depending on the type of election (special, primary, or general).

17.1 Sometime Prior to Election

At least annually, notify school superintendents (in localities where any schools are used as precincts), and other polling place facility managers of all possible dates for general elections or primaries (if held). Notification for multiple years in advance is preferable. The dates are available on the [5-year Schedule of General Elections](#), which also lists associated primary dates if primaries are held.

As soon as known, notify Superintendent and facility managers whether a primary definitely will or will not be held.

As soon as date is known, notify Superintendent and facility managers of upcoming special elections to be held on a date that a general election is not already scheduled. If likely dates are known in advance, give the Superintendent and facility managers as much notice as possible.

- ❗ Ask that an election representative to be added to the school district's "calendar committee" to have direct input into the school schedule, well in advance.

Download and reproduce in sufficient quantities all SBE Election Day forms and materials needed. Some signs, forms and envelopes can be ordered in quantity according to SBE instructions by the deadline established by SBE. See Chapter 18 for details.

- Prepare the voting equipment and program/place the ballots in the machines.
- Set a date to test the machines.

- Provide notice of final machine testing for equipment to be used for absentee voting, the same as you normally do for final testing for equipment to be used for the polls.
- Place public notices of the time and place of the machine testing.
- Test and seal the machines.

Section 24.2-709.1 allows for certain steps to be taken prior to Election Day in order to expedite the processing and counting of optical scan absentee ballots that have been returned by voters. In order to undertake any of the processes listed below, the general registrar must receive the approval of the electoral board. The general registrar may undertake any number of the steps listed below but must receive specific authorization for each process. None of these steps may be undertaken until after the close of registration for an election.

- Examine the ballot envelope (Envelope B) and verify the completion of the Statement of Voter. If the statement cannot be verified under the policies for substantial compliance (see Chapter 11, Absentee Voting), it must be notated for the officers of election to reject on Election Day.
- For a CAP, mark that the voter has voted in the pollbook. This may only be done if the Statement of Voter has been verified in Step 1. If using electronic pollbooks (EPB), refer to your EPB procedures.
- Open the ballot envelope (Envelope B) and insert the voted ballot into the optical scan counter. This may only be done if Steps 1 and 2 have been completed. Under no circumstances may any vote totals be initiated on the tabulator for the election until after the polls close on Election Day. In addition, no person present while ballots are inserted into the tabulator may disclose any information concerning the voted ballots. If this step is undertaken, two officers of election – one from each political party -- must be present.

17.2 Sixty Days Prior To Election

- Design the ballots and determine the office and issue positions.
- By the deadline provided by the SBE, submit the ballot proofs to the SBE for approval.
- Once you receive the ballot approval fax from SBE, sign and fax it back to SBE. Prepare your ballots for voting so that you have them available for voting forty-five days before any general, special, or primary election. (§[24.2-612](#)) Complete SBE-612 indicating how many ballots you are ordering and the justification for the order.
- Notify security at registrar's branch office(s) of extra hours open to public.
- Determine if extra hours for AB voting will be needed. Note: A Locality's normal voting hours should have already been precleared by the U.S. Department of Justice under the Voting Rights Act, if a locality is not "bailed

out.” If hours will be changing, begin process to submit new hours for preclearance at least 90 days before planned change. See Chapter 24.

- Schedule instructional meeting for officers of election.

17.3 Forty-Five Days Prior To Primary & General Election

- Begin absentee voting and complete certification of absentee voting readiness upon request by SBE.
- Post public notice of final registration day.
- Post legal notice of absentee voting and extra hours for absentee voting.
- Schedule an electoral board meeting to accept the ballots, verify that the number of ballots received is correct, and that the ballots are printed correctly.
- Fill out SBE-618(2), “Certificate of Number of Ballots Received from Printer” for signature of electoral board at meeting.
- Record a certification in the electoral board minutes verifying the number of ballots and their acceptance. (§[24.2-618](#).)
- Do a refresher meeting for staff to go over procedures for upcoming election.

17.4 Thirty Days Prior To Election

- Memo to registrars: Effective date of registration form to be put on information sheet for new voters.
- Decide what paper pollbooks, if any, are to be split.
- Notification of upcoming election to:
 - Superintendent and associate superintendent of schools.
 - Responsible official at polling place locations.
- Work order to have voting machine moved from storage to polling place. Should be delivered no later than noon on the day before an election (so you will know early if there are any problems).
- Place a copy of each voting device’s sample ballot in file marked "Voting Machine Sample Ballots" located in locked file drawer.
- Once data entry for election is complete, begin "while books are closed" procedures, entering additions, deletions, changes, and corrections that did not make the deadline into VERIS as “Incomplete” (or “Denied” if they would have to be denied even if books were open). See Chapter 9, for procedures after the books are closed, and for exceptions to the deadline. Note that SBE’s new residency regulation ([SBE Policy 2009-005](#)) requires that an application must be denied if a residency issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, allowing the voter to appeal to the circuit court. [§ 24.2-422](#).
- Place a copy of each sample paper ballot in file marked "Paper Sample Ballots" located in locked file drawer.
- Update referendum/questions file with question info on ballot.
- Send copy of sample ballots to libraries and local papers.
- Check phones at polling places.

- Obtain or update emergency Election Day contact names and phone numbers (including home or cell) for each polling place facility. This should include at least one person who normally has keys to the building, polling room and any room where voting equipment may have been stored, and who can get to the facility quickly if necessary.

17.5 Twenty Days Prior To Election

- Preparation of precinct election materials.
- Send notices to officers of election about instruction meeting.
- Send notices to party chairmen about programming of voting machines.
- Send notice to warehouse regarding machine custodians in building to program/transport machines.
- Send notice to office where ascertainment will take place.
- Prepare office schedule for Monday, Election Day, day after, and ascertainment.
- If using EPBs, power up the units, verify they are operating properly, and charge the batteries. Download initial pollbook data file(s), and DMV data file if desired, from SBE and verify the data is complete and accurate. Build initial EPB data files and verify that the file loads properly on the EPBs and verify the data. Plan preparation of all EPBs and delivery to polling places.

17.6 Fifteen Days Prior To Election

- Prepare results sheet (tally sheets or computer spreadsheet).
- Send copy of results sheet, precinct tally sheets, and sample ballots to county/city information officer if they are helping media with returns.

17.7 Ten Days Prior To Election

- Prepare election night call in sheets to record and track results called in by officers from each precinct.

17.8 Seven Days Prior To Election

- Prepare receipts for delivery of paper ballots, absentee ballot list, and all other election material for chiefs.

- Divide paper and optical scan ballots into packages for each precinct. (§[24.2-620](#))
- Prepare and list election materials provided to each precinct:
- Some supplies merely need to be gathered. These include: pollbook(s), pollbook count forms, absentee ballot applicants list, officer of election oaths, voter information signs, grievance forms, calculator, pens, pencils, clips, note paper, rulers, scissors, tape-measure, and a stapler.
- Some supplies require preparation. These include: statement of results, payroll sheet, sample ballots, precinct maps, precinct/polling place locator, voter entry permits, registration forms, affirmation/challenge forms, and numbered envelopes for return of specified material.
- Prepare receipt for delivery of absentee ballots.
- Prepare voting machine key envelopes (after machines are programmed).
- Send letter to party chair and independent candidates regarding provisional ballot meeting.

17.9 Saturday before Election

- Place paper pollbooks and any supplies for EPBs in proper accordion jacket or binder for supply bags.
- Alphabetize officer of election oath forms for swearing in of chief officer on pick-up table.
- Prepare Election Day transaction adds or deletes form for Election Day.
- Prepare telephone log sheets for Election Day.
- Make additions & corrections to election rosters and pollbooks.
- General registrar signs off on the above.

17.10 Sunday before Election

- Run final absentee ballot report from VERIS.
- Absentee Ballot delivery preparation:
 - Verify final names on lists with ballots.
 - Pack ballots and applications for delivery.
- Have key envelopes with oath letter attached
- Prepare machine custodian oath letters for receipt for delivery of paper ballots and absentee ballot list, precinct election materials, and absentee ballot list.
- If using EPBs, download final pollbook data file(s) from SBE and prepare EPBs.

17.11 Monday before Election (Before 8:30 AM)

- Have electoral board secretary sign absentee ballot list.
- Put on officer of election pick-up table: voting machine keys, receipt for delivery of paper ballots and absentee ballot list, precinct election materials, and absentee ballot list.

17.12 Monday before Election

- Deliver cellular phones to machine custodians and board.
- Deliver forms, badges, materials, telephone and precinct lists, and machine keys to custodians.
- Pull record card of all voters added to roster who actually voted. Enter voting record on VERIS.
- Deliver ballots to each polling place Election Day or have your chief officers pick them up the day before.

17.13 Day after Election

- Check returned precinct election materials.
- Deliver any "Returns" which belong to the Clerk of Court.
- Prepare for noon provisional vote meeting (if necessary).
- Remove new applications for processing.
- Prepare paper ballot reconciliation form for each type of paper ballot for signature of secretary of the electoral board.
- Deliver absentee ballot applications to the Clerk of Court.
- Deliver keys with oaths of machine custodians to the Clerk of Court.
- For provisional ballots meeting, research registration status of each person voting a provisional ballot, and attend meeting to present this information to the electoral board.
- Go over instructions for write-in votes with electoral board assistants.
- Check that total write-ins for each office agree with the statement of results write-in entries.
- Complete Votes Cast column with information from SOR,
- Enter totals on Abstract of Votes,
- Enter data in VERIS Election Results and compare totals to those entered on Abstract to verify that they agree. This includes entering total number of provisional ballots counted as separate precinct. If not, review entries to find error.
- Enter data on county/city web.

- Fax copy of abstracts for each office or referendum certified by SBE to SBE and mail properly executed abstract for each office and referendum on your locality's ballot per instructions.
- Enter provisional vote information into VERIS:
- Enter provisional vote totals for candidates or issues that were counted in VERIS Election Results for Provisional Votes Precinct.
- Determine total number of provisional ballots cast (including counted and not counted) and enter into VERIS Election Results – Total Votes Cast cell of the Provisional Votes Precinct.
- Determine total number of provisional ballots counted and enter into VERIS Election Turnout and Outcome - Provisional Voter Turnout.
- Perform voter search on each voter who voted a provisional ballot whether it was counted or not.
- If voter exists as registered voter, enter that provisional ballot was counted or not and if not, enter reason ballot was not counted. This will automatically generate required notice to be sent to voter whose ballot was not counted.

17.14 Fifteen Days after Election

Absentee ballots received after election go to Clerk of the Court.

17.15 After Deadline for Challenging Election Has Passed

Different time periods may apply for voting/counting equipment on the one hand, and election records on the other. For November general elections certified by SBE, the deadlines for initiating a recount or contest coincide. However, for May municipal elections and other elections, the recount period expires sooner so that the GR can retrieve voting/counting equipment for reuse sooner than other election materials such as pollbooks. §§ [24.2-659](#), [24.2-668](#)

After the period for a recount expires with no proceeding pending:

- Retrieve the voting machine keys from the Clerk of Court.
- Attach custodian and officer of election keys.

After the period for a contest expires with no proceeding:

- Retrieve pollbooks from the Clerk of Court.
- If using EPBs, retrieve EPB data and send Voter Credit file to SBE (can email the file as long as it does NOT contain Social Security Numbers).
- Place all paper pollbooks into cases per SBE instructions for courier.
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- Enter all rejected absentee ballots into VERIS for each voter whose absentee

ballot was rejected:

- Perform Absentee Search for each voter whose absentee ballot was rejected. If voter has been transferred to another locality or registration was legally cancelled before election, ballot will have already been cancelled and rejected.
- After voter is located, check that absentee ballot was rejected and select and enter specific reason why ballot was rejected. This will automatically generate the required notice to be sent to the voter.

17.16 After Pollbooks Are Returned By the SBE

- Verify "list of those who voted" with Pollbooks.
- Process pollbook E.O. changes.
- Check Absentee Pollbook.